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AUTHOR Reid, John Y.; Goetz, Judith J.
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ABSTRACT

Biographical and bibliographical data that indicate the relative weight and contributions made by different disciplines and individuals to the development of the field of higher education are analyzed. Mailing of a questionnaire in 1980 to 623 persons teaching in the field resulted in 150 usable returns from 138 men and 12 women, representing 71 higher education institutions. Eighty-six percent of the respondents' doctoral degrees and 64 percent of their master's degrees were in education; 15 percent of their baccalaureate degrees were also in education. Seventy-four of the respondents indicated that they had an appointment in addition to their higher education faculty position. Forty-six of the additional appointments were administrative, and of those, almost half were higher education department chairs, center directors, or both. Areas of expertise and/or special interest of the respondents are indicated. A total of 516 different individuals were cited by respondents as influential, and basically these people were professional college administrators and faculty members. The nature of influences on academic training and professional development was also elicited. In addition, the books and journals found to be of most use or most importance in 15 categories (i.e., subfields of the field of higher education) are listed. Among the conclusions are following: the field is dominated numerically by men and it has no central discipline, no dominant theory or even a general theoretical orientation accepted by a large majority, and possesses no distinctive approaches, methods, or concepts. (SW)

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Sociological and Bibliographical Aspects
of the Field of Higher Education: A Preliminary Survey

John Y. Reid
Director, Center for the Study of Higher Education and
Chairman, Department of Higher Education
The University of Toledo

and

Judith J. Coetz
Graduate Research Assistant
Center for the Study of Higher Education
The University of Toledo

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Association for the Study of Higher Education

The George Washington University / One Dupont Circle, Suite 630 / Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 296-2597

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"I thought if this S.O.B. could teach higher ed -- so could I."
(Respondent)

"It seems to me that the perception of people changes over the years,
as the respondent's values and weltanschauung change...." (Respondent)

"An encourager and helper -- uniquely endowed with a common touch;
always helpful, considerate, yet never compromising; without a
doubt, the finest person I have ever met." (Respondent)

It must be confessed from the outset that this paper has not a single focus, but two. The authors emphasize the results of an investigation into some sociological aspects of higher education as a field of study, and they present information about the field's written materials -- books, articles, and journals. The two aspects are discussed separately, but they are joined inasmuch as both illustrate higher education's heterogeneity, a diversity which one can argue is both a strength and a weakness. The study was based on the responses of higher education faculty members to a questionnaire that covered a wide range of topics.

LITERATURE

"There are not three good ones [books] covering the field!"

Persons in other fields and disciplines for years have examined a wide variety of their fields' sociological aspects. For example, Baolt "introduces the reader to a neglected aspect of sociological inquiry: the examination of how sociologists deal with the obstacles they confront in their research" (Lantz, p. v); Crane describes "the informal but specialized social system that produces basic scientific knowledge" (Crane, p. 1); and Mullins analyses the intellectual and social activities involved in "the formation of a new discipline, molecular biology....." (Mullins, p. 51).

The field of higher education, however, has not been studied extensively probably for two reasons. First, because the field is relatively new, it is still forming and shifting, a fact that discourages researchers trained to feel comfortable when conducting investigations in which variables can be announced, justified, and controlled within an accepted paradigm. Second, the reluctance on the part of higher education scholars to examine the sociology of the field may be a function of their detachment from the milieu in which their professional roles unfold. Higher education researchers, however, like researchers in other areas are both actors and observers in the research process, a fact that generates tension in terms of the subject/object dualism. Like others, higher education scholars most often resolve the role conflict by choosing to be observers, even though the nature of their professional duties makes the appropriateness of such a resolution questionable.

Dressel and Mayhew's 1974 Higher Education as a Field of Study, though dated and punctuated by the authors' prejudices, is the most important of the works on the field of higher education. The authors mix empirical data and intuition to provide a general examination of the field. Four of the authors' points particularly bear on the current study:

1. Another alternative [model of higher education as a new field of study] for which there was some precedent would have been for a single discipline to become preeminent... much as psychology re-defined educational psychology and became the central discipline for elementary and secondary education. However, not only did none of the orthodox disciplines seem willing to involve itself in higher education, but higher education as a field of study seems too large and variegated to preclude [sic] the hegemony of a single discipline. (p. 24)
2. Higher education as a field of study may progress into a coherent, respected, discipline-like activity, comparable to medicine, or it can remain a variegated cluster of interesting subjects studied almost idiosyncratically by individuals who accidentally found themselves on the terrain. (pp. 100-101)

3. While many have yearned for it, there has grown up no generally accepted theory about how higher education functions, nor has there evolved a theory of how to study it. ...In general, few professors of higher education are preoccupied with theoretical concerns. (p. 112)
4. Higher education as a body of knowledge possess no distinctive approaches, methods, or concepts; it results largely from the use of methods and concepts drawn from the disciplines and applied to the study of higher education. (pp. 146-147)

In addition to Dressel and Mayhew's book, one can cite Clark's article on the "Development of the Sociology of Higher Education," Cooper's essay on "Special Problems of Professors of Higher Education," and forthcoming studies by Newell and Morgan, and Leslie and Morey as examples of works which at least incidentally address selected sociological aspects of the field.

Studies of the field itself are complemented by a few surveys of higher education literature. For example, in 1971 Riegel and Bender published "Basic Reading in Higher Education," an article which sought to answer the question "What are the basic books for students of higher education?" (p. 85) An expanded version of their work, "Who's Reading What in Higher Education" appeared the next year in the ERIC Higher Education Research Currents series. More recently, Drew and Schuster have produced a list of "Recommended Reading for College Presidents," and Bayer has explored "Multi-Method Strategies for Defining 'Core' Higher Education Journals."

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

"I frankly think this study requires interviews with your respondents. You ask questions that require more than just listing things. If you had written me and requested an interview, you would have gotten it." (Respondent)

"I believe what we do is far too complex to be captured by any survey." (Respondent)

"...The range of variables is too vast and [of] too subtle quality to reveal much, if anything, to inquiries such as this." (Respondent)

In the present study, the authors did not use formal participant observation, in-depth interviewing, field work, or other techniques commonly associated with qualitative research. The largely open-ended survey instrument did elicit, however, responses which allowed - even forced - the researchers to "get close to the data." When one "gets close to the data," he or she must develop "the analytical, conceptual, and categorical components of explanation from the data itself -- rather than from the preconceived, rigidly structured, or highly quantified techniques that pigeonhole the empirical social world into the operational definitions that the researcher has constructed." (Filstead, p. 6)

In short, the authors concur with Glaser and Strauss that both qualitative and quantitative data are "useful for both verification and generation of theory," the appropriate goals of all social science research. With them, the authors believe, and this study reflects, that "In many instances, both forms of data are necessary -- not quantitative used to test qualitative, but both used as supplements, as mutual verification and, most important for us, as different forms of data on the same subject...." (p. 18)

Studies of the field of higher education, and indeed many studies of sociological aspects of other fields, tend to be conceptualized to present "determinate knowledge." Bruffee (1981) explains the concept of determinate knowledge:

Before the twentieth century, educated members of Western cultures assumed that knowledge was hierarchical, externally determined, and individually attained. Until the late eighteenth century, the supreme point of reference was an almighty God. Priests of the religious establishments were responsible for discovering and examining what

we should know, and then teaching it to us. From the eighteenth century on, the fixed point of reference became almighty mathematics. Scientists were its prophets. The frame of reference against which we determined the authority of knowledge had changed, but the underlying structure of knowledge had not. Knowledge remained determinate, hierarchical, and individualistic.

.....

In short, before the twentieth century most educated people believed, and many still do, that the value and certainly of anyone's claim to know something is a function of its proximity - that is, its structural similarity - to knowledge at the top of the pile: mathematically validated knowledge. Every field has struggled at one time or another to cover its epistemological nakedness with the broad mantle of science. We have long believed that however "soft" our knowledge on this scale, with hard work and diligent theoretical fence building we could each of us nudge our knowledge further up the ladder toward the "scientific" ideal. (pp. 178-179)

The bibliographic findings of the current study are the result of the application of standard quantitative techniques which are the main tools of determinate knowledge. The sociological findings result from a blending of quantitative techniques and the qualitative processes Bruffee associates with "indeterminate knowledge." Indeterminate knowledge is that knowledge which "turns out not to be some composite, collective memory-bank of mankind, but the combination of two mental functions: creative insight and what we have traditionally called 'judgment.'" (Bruffee, p. 181)

The authors of this study believe that the meaningful investigation of sociological aspects of higher education can be facilitated by intellectual tolerance for the concept of indeterminate knowledge and the use of qualitative approaches and data which supplement qualitative approaches and data. In deviating from the high science inclination that marks most of the current research in higher education, the authors join a significant tradition "that recognizes the importance of both an inner and an outer perspective of human

behavior." (Filstead, p. 4) Wirth points out that objects "can be known purely from the outside, while mental and social processes can be known only from the inside," as well as through the shared meanings and interpretations we give to the objects. He points out that "insight may be regarded as the core of social knowledge. It is arrived at by being on the inside of the phenomena to be observed.... It is participation in an activity that generates interest, purpose, point of view, value, meaning, and intelligibility, as well as bias." (Wirth xxii)

METHODOLOGY

"This questionnaire is too long!" (Respondent)

"This questionnaire, I believe, doesn't collect the type of data needed to answer the stated purpose in your accompanying letter." (Respondent)

A questionnaire was mailed in the spring of 1980 to 623 persons on a list provided by the ERIC Clearinghouse for Higher Education. That list had been developed from a joint ERIC/Association for the Study of Higher Education survey of higher education programs. The original mailing and a fall 1980 follow-up resulted in 191 returns (31%). There were 150 useable returns (24%). The sample included 138 men (92%) and 12 women (8%).

On the original ERIC mailing list, 107 institutions were listed as places of employment. The persons in the sample represented 71 (66%) of those institutions, including 64 (89%) of those employing at least 5 people associated with the institution's higher education program. The sample included both full-time and part-time faculty members.

FINDINGS

"I wish these had been female role models during my professional journey. There were none. My career was in the world of men. None of these men were [sic] outstanding. If I hadn't had my own strong identity -- I would have never made it." (Respondent)

"As a fellow student and a fellow professional colleague, [she] taught me to use my knowledge base and my glib tongue to help others by synthesizing for them (rather than simply losing my temper)." (Respondent)

"Chaired dissertation. Taught me to research and understand faculty behavior, to appreciate stats. (I taught him to write.)" (Respondent)

Academic training

Eighty-six percent of the respondents' doctoral degrees and 64% of their master's degrees were in education. Just 15% of the respondents' baccalaureate degrees were in education. At all three degree levels, most of the non-education degrees were awarded in the social sciences, dominated by sociology and psychology, and in the humanities, dominated by history and English. Nine percent of the doctoral majors were in the social sciences, and 5% were in the humanities. Sixteen percent of the master's majors were in the social sciences, and 15% were in the humanities. Twenty-five percent of the bachelor's degrees were awarded in the social sciences, 39% in the humanities. Only at the baccalaureate level was the percentage of majors in the math/sciences appreciable (11%).

Additional responsibilities

Seventy-four (49%) of the respondents indicated that they had an appointment in addition to their higher education faculty position. Forty-six (62%) of the additional appointments were administrative, and of those, almost half (22) were higher education department chairs, center directors, or both. Other administrative positions included a range of mid- and upper-level management

appointments -- associate dean, dean, associate provost, vice president, vice chancellor, and the like.

Fifteen percent of those with additional appointments had joint faculty appointments; 7% held both an administrative position and a joint faculty appointment; and the rest (16%) indicated a wide variety of additional appointments -- from state and national positions to journal editor, researcher, and grants writer.

Expertise and/or special interest

A list of fifteen areas of expertise and/or special interest was synthesized from earlier higher education studies and provided on the questionnaire. No limit was placed on the number of areas which could be checked. The field's classification problem and heterogeneity are highlighted by the fact that the respondents added no less than thirty-seven additional categories under "Other." The following is a list of the original categories, with the number of individuals checking each as an area of expertise and/or special interest:

Administration - 87	College Teaching - 27
History and Philosophy - 36	Adult and Continuing Education/ Lifelong Learning - 26
Institutional Research and Planning - 35	Finance and Business Management - 26
Curriculum - 32	Law and Higher Education - 21
Community/Junior College - 32	Comparative/International Higher Education - 17
State and National Coordination and Planning - 29	Non-Traditional Higher Education - 16
Assessment and Evaluation - 28	Collective Bargaining - 14
Student Personnel Administration - 27	

The nature of influences on academic training and professional development

The respondents were asked to list those persons who had "contributed the most [to] or had the most influence [on]" the respondent's academic training and professional development. They were also asked to provide a brief description of the nature of the contribution or influence. Many respondents named

the same individuals in both categories, and others listed persons under one or the other category but not under both. The nature of the data in these two categories made it impossible to distinguish between influences on academic training and professional development; therefore, the two categories were collapsed into one.

Categorizing the types of influences was difficult. Two dichotomies appear to be appropriate for this analysis: hard and soft influences, and pure and applied influences. Hard influences were defined by the authors as those which involved quantitative or technical methods and processes, such as "application of quantitative methods to decision making," "use of systems analysis and computers in research," and "engineering approach to education problems." Soft influences were defined as those which involved humanistic or general concerns of a non-technical nature, such as "exposure to organizational theory," "development of self," and "how not to treat graduate students." In short, hard influences were paradigmatic in orientation, soft influences were non-paradigmatic. In this study, 90% of the reported influences were "soft;" 10% were "hard."

Pure influences were defined as those which involved the effect of theoretical knowledge on the individual, or a general, personal influence. Applied influences were defined as those which involved specific actions on behalf of the respondent. "Challenging me on all assumptions made so that I learned to think and defend my statements," "stimulated intellectual curiosity in the history and philosophy of higher education," and "provided broad perspectives on adult development" were examples of "pure" influences. "Provided me with start in consulting and publication," "dissertation adviser," and "assisted in writing scholarly articles and writing research grants," were examples of "applied" influences. In this study, 55% of the reported influences were "pure;" 45% were "applied."

The persons who were influential

A total of 516 different individuals were cited by respondents as "influential." Of this number, 485 (94%) were male; 31 (6%) were female. Thirty (20%) of the respondents specifically cited the influence of a "mentor," while 38 (26%) cited the influence of the major field adviser or dissertation chair.

Basically the persons named as being "influential" were professional college administrators and faculty members; only 25 (4%) clearly could be identified as being outside education. This small number included high school teachers, family members, community leaders, local school officials, a housekeeper, and a hired man on the family farm.

Forty-five (9%) of the 516 persons cited as "influential" were named by two or more respondents, 11 (2%) by three or more, and 5 (1%) by four or more. No woman was named by more than one respondent. The following persons were named by three or more of the respondents: G. Lester Anderson, Roald Campbell, M. M. Chambers, Burton Clark, W. H. Cowley, Paul Dressel, Lyman Glenny, B. Lamar Johnson, David Riesman, Robert Shaffer, and Gilbert Wrenn. All but David Riesman were named, in almost every case, by former students or colleagues at the person's current or former institution.

It is important to note that the "influential" persons' fields of specialization were similar in their distribution among education, the social sciences, and the humanities to the master's and doctoral majors of the respondents themselves. Sixty percent of the "influential" persons were in an education area; 17% were in the social sciences; and 17% were in the humanities. In the social sciences, influential persons tended to be in sociology and psychology, and in the humanities, they tended to be in history or English.

Literature

Respondents were asked to "list the three books, monographs, and articles you consider to be most important for students and practitioners" in each of their areas of expertise and/or special interest. Eight respondents indicated there were not any resources of value in their particular area(s) of expertise or interest. Seven persons stated that the task was impossible because the list of fifteen areas included categories too broad to reflect accurately the degree of specialization within the fifteen areas. One individual exclaimed: "The literature of higher education is filled with tons of philosophical -- unsubstantiated garbage. I spend too much time sifting through the plethora and finding too little."

Most of the works cited tended to be specific to the field of education or to the discipline specialities of the respondents, and most were publications of recent vintage. Only a few people included the literature of great philosophers or the classics of political theory.

The following twenty-nine books, nine of which were listed in more than one of the original fifteen categories, were cited by five or more respondents. The list, which is in descending order of importance, includes the number of persons who cited the book and the categories in which the book was listed:

- Rudolph, The American College and University (20): History and Philosophy
- Halstead, Statewide Planning in Higher Education (14): Institutional Research and Planning, Administration, and State and National Coordination and Planning
- Brubacher and Rudy, Higher Education in Transition (13): History and Philosophy
- Carnegie Commission, Missions of the College Curriculum (11): Curriculum
- Corson, Governance of Colleges and Universities (11): Administration
- Chickering, Education and Identity (10): Adult and Continuing Education/Lifelong Learning, Non-Traditional Education, and Student Personnel Administration

- Cohen and March, Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President (10): Administration
- Rudolph, Curriculum (10): College Teaching, Curriculum
- Levine, Handbook on Undergraduate Curriculum (9): Curriculum
- Dressel, Handbook on Academic Evaluation (8): Assessment and Evaluation, Curriculum, and Institutional Research and Planning
- Mortimer and McConnell, Sharing Authority Effectively (8): Administration
- Astin, Four Critical Years (7): Administration, Community/Junior College, Student Personnel Administration
- Berdahl, Statewide Coordination and Planning (7): Coordination and Planning
- Brubacher, The Law and Higher Education: A Casebook (7): Administration; Law and Higher Education
- Miller and Prince, The Future of Student Affairs (7): Student Personnel Administration
- Munroe, Profile of the Community College (7): Community/Junior College
- Veysey, The Emergence of the American University (7): History and Philosophy
- Baldrige, Power and Conflict in the University (6): Administration
- Bowen, Investment in Learning (6): Administration, Finance, Institutional Research and Planning, and Student Personnel Administration
- Hofstadter and Smith, American Higher Education: A Documentary History (6): Administration, History and Philosophy
- Jenks and Riesman, The Academic Revolution (6): Coordination and Planning, History
- Katz and Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organization (6): Administration
- Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education (6): Adult and Continuing Education/Lifelong Learning
- Perkins, The University as an Organization (6): Administration
- Thornton, Community Junior College (6): Community/Junior College
- Baldrige, Academic Governance: Research on Institutional Politics and Decision Making (5): Administration
- Brubacher, On the Philosophy of Higher Education (5): History and Philosophy
- McKeachie, Teaching Tips: A Guidebook for the Beginning College Teacher (5): College Teaching

The ERIC/AAHE monograph series and the various Jossey-Bass New Directions series were listed by 31 and 23 persons respectively, although the citation of specific titles was rare. Brown's Return to the Academy: Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education was listed by nine respondents, all of whom indicated expertise and/or interest in Student Personnel Administration. It was the only monograph specifically cited by more than one respondent.

Burton Clark's 1973 "Development of a Sociology of Higher Education," which was cited by three persons, was the only article mentioned by more than one person. This finding supports two respondents' contention that journal articles are too short-lived to be of lasting value. The point is further supported by the fact that not one of the articles selected for inclusion in the fiftieth anniversary volume of the Journal of Higher Education, articles in part chosen for having "stood the test of time," was cited by any of the respondents.

One hundred and thirty-three journals were listed by respondents as being among the "most useful in your particular area(s) of expertise and/or special interest." The listing included both "higher education journals" and "other journals." The following thirty-one journals were listed by five or more persons:

<u>Journal of Higher Education</u> (89)	<u>American Sociological Review</u> (9)
<u>The Chronicle of Higher Education</u> (67)	<u>Community College Review</u> (8)
<u>Change: The Magazine of Learning</u> (51)	<u>Sociology of Education</u> (8)
<u>Higher Education</u> (31)	<u>Lifelong Learning: The Adult Years</u> (8)
<u>Phi Delta Kappa</u> (28)	<u>Community/Junior College Research Quarterly</u> (7)
<u>Administrative Science Quarterly</u> (27)	<u>The American Scholar</u> (7)
<u>Research in Higher Education</u> (26)	<u>AAHE Bulletin</u> (6)
<u>Educational Record</u> (25)	<u>Academe: Bulletin of the AAUP</u> (6)
<u>Harvard Educational Review</u> (22)	<u>Educational Administration Quarterly</u> (6)
<u>Review of Educational Research</u> (17)	<u>History of Education Quarterly</u> (6)
<u>Community and Junior College Journal</u> (16)	<u>Journal of Educational Psychology</u> (6)
<u>Daedalus</u> (15)	<u>Harvard Business Review</u> (5)
<u>Journal of College Student Personnel</u> (13)	<u>Journal of Education Finance</u> (5)
<u>American Educational Research Journal</u> (11)	<u>Policy Studies Journal</u> (5)
<u>NASPA Journal</u> (11)	<u>Public Interest</u> (5)
<u>Adult Education</u> (10)	

DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

... a man might feel: the building of this bridge will never be completed, but say life will surely have its end. A man might therefore risk a running leap from the unfinished edge to the shore that he thinks he sees ahead. Perhaps he has seen right and has estimated his own powers correctly. In which event, applause. Perhaps he has badly miscalculated on both counts. In which case a certain dampness sets in. Maybe he can swim back to safety, even if somewhat less than applauded. In any event, he has found out how far he can see and how well he can jump. Even if he is never heard from again, perhaps those who are still dawdling at the edge will learn something useful. (Gouldner, p. xxxviii)

The results of this preliminary survey are suggestive, not conclusive.

It is clear, however, despite this caution, that one can make some important points.

1. Higher education as a field of study is dominated numerically by men.

Ninety percent of the population from which the sample was taken were men; 92% of the sample, itself, were men; 94% of the individuals listed by respondents as having been particularly influential in their academic training or professional development were men; 100% of those "influential" persons listed by more than one respondent were men; 97% of the authors of the "top twenty-nine" books in the field were men (There was one woman co-author.); and the comments of female respondents uniformly reflected the male domination of their professional lives. The implications of male domination are many, especially in terms of faculty and student recruitment in the field.

2. The study provides evidence to support specific points made by Dressel and Mayhew in 1974.

a. The field has no central discipline. A vast majority of respondents received both their master's and doctoral degrees in a wide variety of education areas; and at the bachelor's level, where one sees some concrete discipline influence, that influence is divided between the social sciences, in which sociology and psychology are predominant, and the humanities, in which history and

English are predominant. Further, the persons the respondents themselves named as having been "influential" in their academic training and/or professional development were similarly distributed in terms of fields of specialization to the graduate major fields listed by the respondents. One can not see a single disciplinary focus but the multiple influences of education specializations, sociology, psychology, history, and English.

b. The idiosyncratic nature of the field and the diversity of its faculty members is suggested by the great variety of positions or appointments held by respondents in addition to their faculty positions.

c. Higher education as a field has no dominant theory or even a general theoretical orientation accepted by a large majority. This contention is supported by the fact that the field has not one discipline master but many discipline masters. In popular parlance, the field has no predominant paradigm. The almost even distribution of the types of influences respondents thought particularly important in their academic training and/or professional development into "pure" and "applied" categories tangentially supports the Dressel and Mayhew point that "few professors of higher education are preoccupied with theoretical concerns." (p. 112)

d. The notion that the field "possesses no distinctive approaches, methods, or concepts" is supported by the fact that even fifteen quite broad categories could not properly define respondents' areas of expertise and/or special interest. Indeed, 39% of the respondents felt compelled to define thirty-seven different, additional areas.

In short, higher education as a field of study is diverse. However, while Dressel and Mayhew's tone suggests that higher education is not just young, but intellectually immature, since it is not like identifiable disciplines or even many other fields in terms of theory, personnel, or activities, there is another

way to view the field. There is an answer to those who in their heart of hearts really wish the field were a discipline, and the harder the better. It is to suggest that the uniqueness and ultimate value of higher education well may be its diversity, the fact that it is a flexible field to which players can come in changing combinations to solve real postsecondary problems. Just as general education can be that structure of the curriculum which integrates and broadens, so too can higher education as a field of study borrow and synthesize methodologies to help in the most important work of defining and finding solutions to postsecondary education problems. It is possible that higher education scholars might do well to stop worrying about the field's lack of distinctive theory and accept that theirs is an applied area.

Given the above, and given the fact that this is a preliminary survey, the authors can suggest several directions for future research.

1. The current study could be replicated, with a larger, better sample and a revised questionnaire.
2. The study could be replicated and the results compared to a duplicate study of professors in another field or discipline. Such a comparison might enhance the possibility of generating theory about the field of higher education.
3. A similar survey could be conducted, and the results of the study could be complemented by data collected from in-depth interviews of selected respondents. This is to say there could be a careful combining of quantitative and qualitative techniques.
4. There should be a study of the development of the field. Mullins' examination of the origins of molecular biology is a useful example of what can be done in tracing the evolution of intellectual problems and processes, social structures and activities, communication networks, and genealogical

lines in a emerging discipline or field. It is important for such a search to be an intellectual enterprise in description and possibly the generation of theory, not merely a search for identity followed by lament.

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